

## **KBSNA sessions to be held at AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Nov. 21-22**

Again this November there will be two sessions sponsored by the Karl Barth Society in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in San Francisco.

The first session will be on Friday afternoon, November 21, with a second session on Saturday morning, November 22.

### **INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE KARL BARTH SOCIETY**

All who are interested are invited to join the Karl Barth Society of North America.

To become a member of the Barth Society, send your name, address, and annual dues of \$15.00 (\$10.00 for students) to:

Professor Russell Palmer  
Dept. of Philosophy and Religion  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Omaha, NE 68182-0265

Checks should be made payable to "Karl Barth Society." *Members whose dues were last paid prior to November 1996 are urged to send in their annual renewal.*

The Friday afternoon session will be held in the San Francisco Hilton—Taylor Room, from 3:45 to 6:15 p.m. The program will begin with a presentation on "**Barth on Religion**" by **Joseph DiNoia**, O.P. (Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C.).

The rest of the Friday session will feature a lecture by **Gerhard Sauter** (Ecumenical Institute, University of Bonn). Professor Sauter will address the question: "**Why Isn't Barth's 'Church Dogmatics' a 'Theology of Hope'?**"

On Saturday morning, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m., there will be a discussion with **Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger** (Princeton Seminary) of her recent book *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Eerdmans, 1995 ISBN 0-8028-0842-5). In addition to the author, other members of the panel will be **Clifford Green** (Hartford Seminary) and **Elisabeth Koenig** (General Seminary). The Saturday morning session will be in the San Francisco Hilton—Union Square 1 & 2.

The AAR/SBL Annual Meeting officially begins on Saturday afternoon. The KBSNA sessions are listed as AM26 and AM65 in the "Additional Meetings" section of the 1997 AAR/SBL program book.

*A new CBS — and not a television network!*

## **CENTER FOR BARTH STUDIES ESTABLISHED AT PRINCETON**

A Center for Barth Studies, first proposed by the Karl Barth Society of North America, has recently been established on the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary. George Hunsinger, one of today's outstanding Barth scholars, has been named director of the center.

*(continued on page 2)*

## CENTER FOR BARTH STUDIES ESTABLISHED AT PRINCETON

(continued from page 1)

In a recent interview, Hunsinger, who began his duties September 1, commented that the center is just getting underway and is still in its early stages, currently formulating policies and goals. The director's office is located in the new Luce Library on the Princeton Seminary campus, with space set apart for the center's holdings.

The immediate goal, Hunsinger reported, is to acquire a set of everything written by and about Karl Barth, so that scholars interested in research on Barth can come and have everything accessible in one place.

The center is inviting anyone who has materials by or about Barth (especially those that are hard to obtain) to consider making them part of the CBS collection. He emphasized that the center is starting from scratch in acquiring its holdings. Asked if he had a "want list," he said he is especially interested in letters from Barth and materials in German. For example, anyone who has a complete set of *Zwischen den Zeiten* or *Theologische Existenz heute* could make a welcome contribution by donating them to the center.

Hunsinger is planning a trip soon to visit the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Meeter Center is in some ways a model for what the Center for Barth Studies (CBS) may become.

He announced that CBS is planning a conference next fall to formally inaugurate the center.

In addition to assembling a complete collection of books and articles, Hunsinger indicated that he hopes to establish a visiting scholar program.

Among ideas being suggested are attempts at outreach, such as promoting theological reading groups around the country, where pastors and other interested persons could meet regularly to deal with manageable chunks of the *Church Dogmatics* over a period of time; efforts to reach out to seminarians to stimulate serious theological reading; perhaps a speakers' bureau; week-end conferences or retreats might be another possibility. Hunsinger emphasized that he would welcome other ideas.

Hunsinger is especially concerned to interest pastors in Barth's theology since Barth himself saw the *Church Dogmatics* as an aid to pastors in their work, and nothing made Barth happier than to hear from groups of pastors reading and discussing the *Dogmatics*. Hunsinger commented that he has found his own contacts with such groups exciting because "they get the point of it." After all, he noted, what Barth has given us is an *ecclesial theology* (which might be a more adequate English title than "Church Dogmatics").

One project the center would like to sponsor right away is a translation of the Greek and Latin citations in the *Church Dogmatics*. In teaching an intensive course on CD II/1 at Andover Newton Theological School recently, Hunsinger prepared such a translation (based on the German translations in the *Studienausgabe*) and found it extremely helpful. If there are volunteers to work on an English translation of Barth's Greek and Latin quotations, Hunsinger will be glad to coordinate the effort. Interested readers are invited to contact him at his office: (609) 252-2114.

(See related story on actions of KBSNA Executive, p. 4.)

## On the 25th Anniversary of the KBSNA

*Remarks by David Demson, long-time Secretary of the Karl Barth Society of North America, at the banquet of the annual conference in June 1997, held on the campus of North Park College in Chicago.*

It was a grand occasion 25 years ago in Toronto. The Ambassador to Canada from Switzerland opened the Karl Barth Exhibition. The press were there. A long interview with Arthur Cochrane and me appeared in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

It was also an exciting occasion. Bill Stringfellow chaired the banquet at which Markus Barth spoke about the meeting of the Karl Barth Society of Europe held earlier that year at which Marquardt's "hot" book on Barth's theology and socialism had been heatedly discussed.

Markus, Bill Stringfellow, Jim Smart, Arthur Cochrane, Paul Lehmann, and Paul Minear conferred in groups about Barth's theology and the then current Vietnam war and the civil rights struggle in the United States.

Many were there who are still around and have been active in the Society: Walt Lowe, Don Dayton, Martin Rumscheidt, Russ Palmer, Jim Nelson, Bill Klempa.

Over 200 people attended. There were present: the Roman Catholic student of Paul Lehmann, Emilien Lamirande; the Jewish Barthian, Michael Wyschogrod; the Bonhoeffer scholar, John Godsey. The faculty of the newly created Toronto School of Theology was out in strength.

Many intellectual women were present (perhaps 50), but 25 years ago there were few women professors

of theology. If my memory is accurate, a couple of Koreans were there and perhaps three Afro-Americans, but it was largely a conference of Caucasians. (Regrettably this hasn't changed very much). There were some 50 to 60 pastors; a number of Jews and quite a few Roman Catholics. And there were several agnostics—most of whom were graduate students from Toronto.

The occasion had a grandeur and it was for me exciting. Was that because 25 years ago I was—as were Russell and Jim—still a young man?

I have many recollections of what was said. I will recount only four; in each case I discern an affirmation which has continued to characterize the life of the Society over the years.

(Before I begin recounting these recollections, may I note that my most vivid recollection, for some reason, is that of something Markus said during his account of the meeting of the Karl Barth Society of Europe that had been held two months earlier. During the debate on Marquardt's book at that meeting Jüngel had been attacked. "Having heard this attack [upon him] Jüngel silently packed his brief case, stood up, and left the room, with just a little emphasis on the closing of the door behind him.")

1. My first recollection is of Paul Minear's address. In it he quoted Barth's statement in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*: "I tried to find my way between the problem of human life on the one hand and the content of the Bible on the other." Minear's comment was that while—subsequent to making this statement—Barth became a professor of theology, he never left behind him concern for the work of the pastor who must prepare her/his sermon for Sunday morning.

Throughout our 25 years we have always sought to be a society in which scholarly pastors will feel welcome and find the papers and discussions fruitful for their work of preaching and teaching.

2. My second recollection is of Paul Lehmann's address on the issue of the concreteness of theology. Lehmann recalled the legend that on the portico of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem there was inscribed: *Hic verbum caro factum est*.

Reminding his listeners that we are ever surrounded by principalities, all clamouring for power, Lehmann asked how we are to find our way. Then, by way of correcting his question, he quoted Bonhoeffer speaking out of his time's struggles with the principalities: "The Bible knows nothing at all about the pathos and problematic of the question concerning 'our way'. Our way has no weight of its own, no problematic of its own, no tragedy of its own. It is simply 'doing the truth' (John 3:21), wherein the accent

falls wholly on the side of truth ... Along this way, to let Jesus Christ find us, this is our way."

Lehmann's talk was delivered in the time of the Vietnam war, of the civil rights struggle in the U.S., of Watergate. Yet he attested that our way has no weight, problematic or tragedy of its own. It is a matter of seeing clearly what God is doing in the world—of seeing clearly that "hic".

I cannot say that every conference of the KBSNA has echoed the stirring character of Lehmann's address. But in virtually every one of them that has attended to Barth's work, there was a "seeing" that our way has no weight, problematic, or tragedy of its own—rather our way is to let Jesus Christ find us.

3. I sat with Michael Wyschogrod during Markus' account of the Karl Barth Society of Europe's reaction to Marquardt's book. He regretted Barth's left wing politics and kept whispering in my ear, "The chickens are coming home to roost." He was alarmed that Barth's left wing politics was being promoted as the engine of Barth's anthropology and even of his theology.

But had Michael listened carefully, he would have heard Markus make clear that theology—for his father—was not determined within the walls of our political conceptions, but rather theology is, among other things, the method by which Christians give and receive instruction about how to approach the political realm. The Christian as Christian bears political responsibility. And with all the changes in Barth's thinking about politics, one point remained clear from the 1920s to the end: our prayers of invocation and petition are commanded by God; and ingredient in that command is the demand that our thinking, attitudes, and action conform to our prayers.

This political responsibility—given with the divine injunction to pray—has not been the subject of every conference of the KBSNA, but the point has been made during nearly every one of them, if at some more implicitly than explicitly.

4. My final recollection is of Arthur Cochrane's address. Cochrane's task was to give a sketch of Barth's life, but—as I recollect—he didn't. He didn't because he had no interest in promoting Barth as a great man or in promoting him to heaven. And with almost no exceptions, there has been no interest in hagiography throughout the life of the Society. Such an effort has always been thought beside the point—biblically. The notion of a Saint Karl Barth has simply been thought wrong headed. (Although I can report that once on a visit to Basel, Markus took pride in driving me to Karl Barth Platz. But I felt uncomfortable, because I didn't know how to react.)

The more pointed question for Cochrane and the Society has been about Barth's theology. Was

Cochrane and are we in the business of promoting Barth's theology? My answer is the same as Cochrane's, his answer being the theme of his address: "witness." Karl Barth received the same commission as had the apostles before him and as each of us has received after him: the commission to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. The interest of the Society, according to Cochrane and all who to this day have worked in it, is not in promoting Barth's theology, but in *using* it because of its striking clarity in saying in other words in our span of time what the apostles and prophets witnessed. In sum, the many who have worked in the Society have done their work because they believed Barth pointed the way and prompted us afresh to enter into the world of the biblical witness.

### KBSNA Executive Meets June 27 in Chicago

A meeting of the Executive of the Karl Barth Society of North America was held on June 27 at North Park College in Chicago. Present were Ronald Goetz (President), David Demson (General Secretary), James Nelson, Russell Palmer, and Hugh Reid.

The Executive accepted the proposal of Princeton Theological Seminary to be the home of the Center for Barth Studies (CBS). Thanks were extended to Yale Divinity School for its proposal, and to Stephen Crocco for his work leading to the establishment of the CBS.

President Goetz and Secretary Demson were appointed to meet with the Director of the CBS and the Director of the Princeton Seminary Library to discuss the relation between the Barth Society and the CBS.

The Executive appointed a Committee on the Constitution (consisting of Goetz, Demson, and Reid) to draw up a draft of a revised constitution which is to take into account the establishment of the CBS at Princeton.

The Executive nominated the following slate of Directors: Stephen Crocco, Ellen Charry, David Demson, Ronald Goetz, George Hunsinger, James Nelson, Russell Palmer, and Hugh Reid.

Nominated to serve as Corresponding Directors were Donald Dayton, Charles Dickinson III, William Klempa, Walter Lowe, Scott Rodin, Martin Rumscheidt, Suzanne Selinger, and Wayne Stumme.

It was decided to propose Princeton as the location of the KBSNA annual conference in 1998. The members of the Executive (Directors and Corresponding Directors) in the Princeton area were authorized to organize and plan the conference.

The Executive also proposed that the KBSNA co-sponsor the conference tentatively scheduled for July, 1998 and being organized by Wayne Stumme.

Finally, the Executive proposed that annual dues for membership in the KBSNA be raised to \$15.00 US.

A meeting of the membership of the Karl Barth Society of North America was held in conjunction with the annual conference at North Park College. The meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. on June 27, 1997 with President Goetz in the chair. The membership voted to approve the recommendations of the Executive as listed above.

### CALL FOR PAPERS

The American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature, Rocky Mountain—Great Plains Region, will hold its annual meeting Friday and Saturday, March 20 and 21, 1998 at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Proposals for papers are due November 15, 1997. If there is sufficient interest, a separate session can be organized devoted to papers on topics related to the theology of Karl Barth. Since 1998 will be the 30th anniversary of Barth's death, perhaps a panel could deal with the influence of Barth's theology 30 years later (or some similar theme).

If anyone is interested in participating, please contact the undersigned before November 15:

Russell W. Palmer  
 Department of Philosophy and Religion  
 University of Nebraska at Omaha  
 Omaha, NE 68182-0265  
 Telephone: (402) 554-3066  
 FAX: (402) 554-3296  
 e-mail: rpalmer@unomaha.edu

KARL BARTH SOCIETY NEWSLETTER  
 Department of Philosophy and Religion  
 University of Nebraska at Omaha  
 Omaha, NE 68182-0265

